Employee Well-Being Report

Data-driven insights into people's happiness and success at work

Editors' note: Welcome to Glint's first Employee Well-Being Report. This is an improved version of our 2020 data insights series, which shed light on unprecedented levels of employee burnout, suffering workplace connections, and other topics shaping the employee experience.

One major difference from last year's reports is that we now track employee happiness at work over time. With so much change, we believe this view will help all of us better understand the wider context of fluctuations in employees' happiness levels.

Thanks for reading.

Once a quarter, our People Science team does a deep dive into our global employee engagement and workforce data to better understand how organizations can help employees be happy and successful at work.

Employee Happiness at Work

.65% ↓

QUARTERLY CHANGE

Employee happiness at work **fell .65%** from September to December 2020.

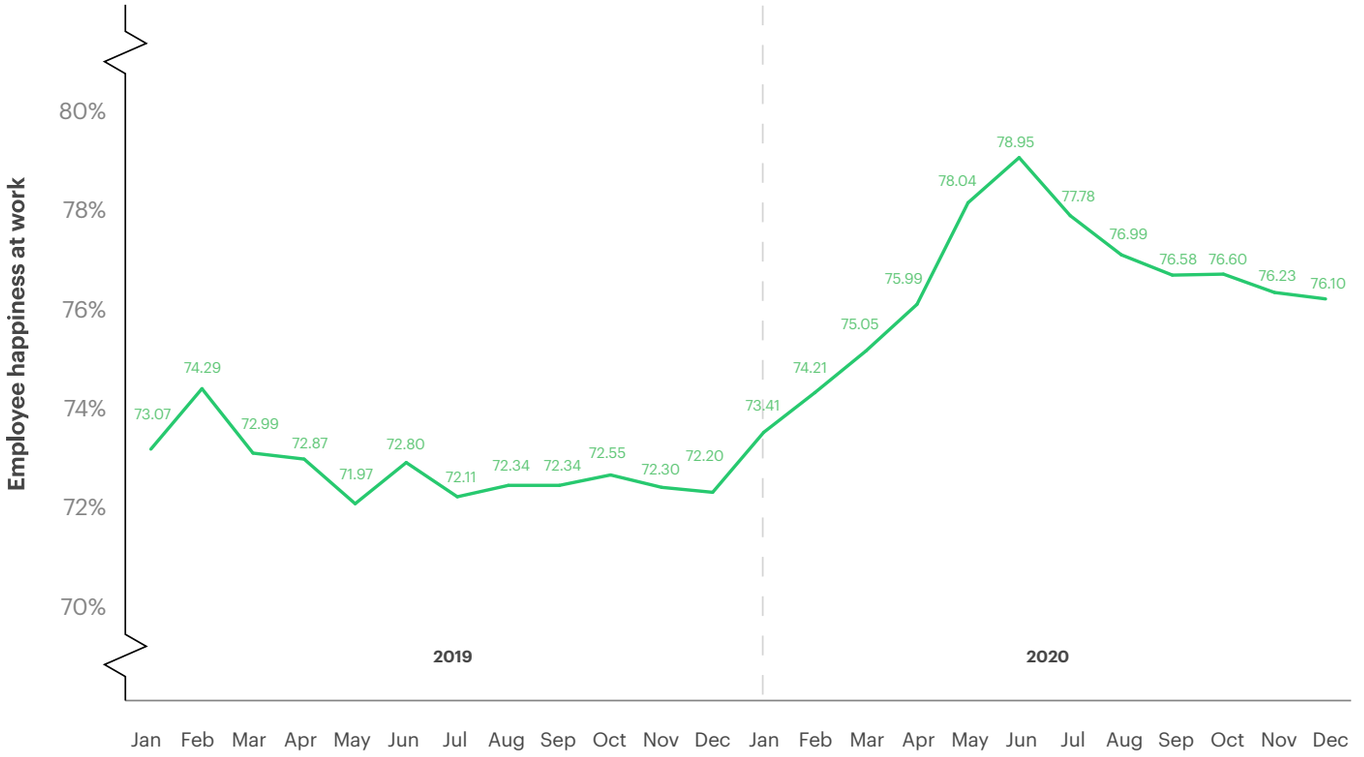
5.4% ↑

YEARLY COMPARISON

However, employee happiness at work **rose 5.4%** in December 2020 as compared to December 2019.

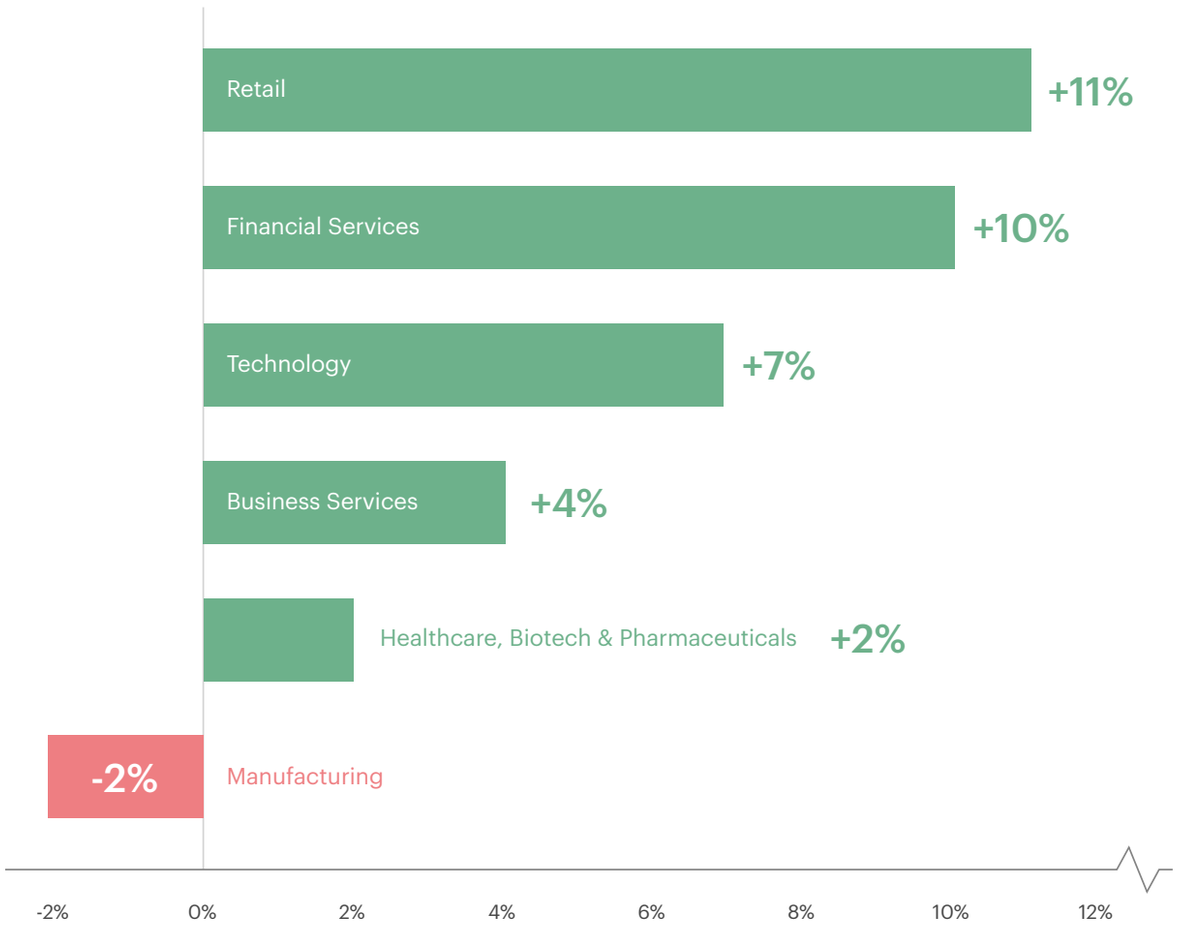
Yearly comparison

— **Happiness Index** (by percentage of employees)



Employee happiness in the retail industry saw the biggest increase last year, jumping 11% from January to December 2020.

12-month change, by industry



Top takeaway:

Despite a difficult year, employees were happier at work

by the end of 2020 than they were at the end of 2019.

What Glint People Science expert Jaime Gonzales says:

2020 provided us with stark lessons on what it's like to experience disparate beliefs, feelings, or realities simultaneously, and this couldn't be truer for employees' work experience over the past 12 months. Employee happiness at work rose in 2020—all while employee burnout levels continue to see record highs (see below).

What's to account for high levels of employee happiness amidst the most challenging year in modern history?

It's important to remember we're talking about people's ***happiness at work.*** While chaos reigned in the outside world, people asked themselves, "Where can I find support, focus, and even refuge?" For many, that place was work.

At its best, work can provide people with meaning and purpose.

It can offer challenges and growth opportunities that push us to do better and tap into our sense of accomplishment. It's not an overstatement to say that, since the pandemic's onset, employees have been tested in ways previously unimaginable—and have risen to the occasion. Organizations that provide strategic learning support and stretch assignments are poised to improve employee happiness while meeting changing business goals.

In 2020, organizations also gave people a sense of security.

The pandemic elevated basic human needs for safety and stability. The year-over-year rise in happiness at work reflects employees' sense of gratitude for their job in turbulent times and, in many cases, the new resources and support their organizations made available.

How we measure employee happiness at work: *"How happy are you working at your company?" One seemingly simple*

question can predict employees' sense of happiness, including their: job satisfaction, motivation to go above and beyond, organizational pride, plans to stay, desire to make an impact, and much more.

In our years of data collection and analysis, we have found that employee happiness is a precursor to business success.

Burnout

4% ↑

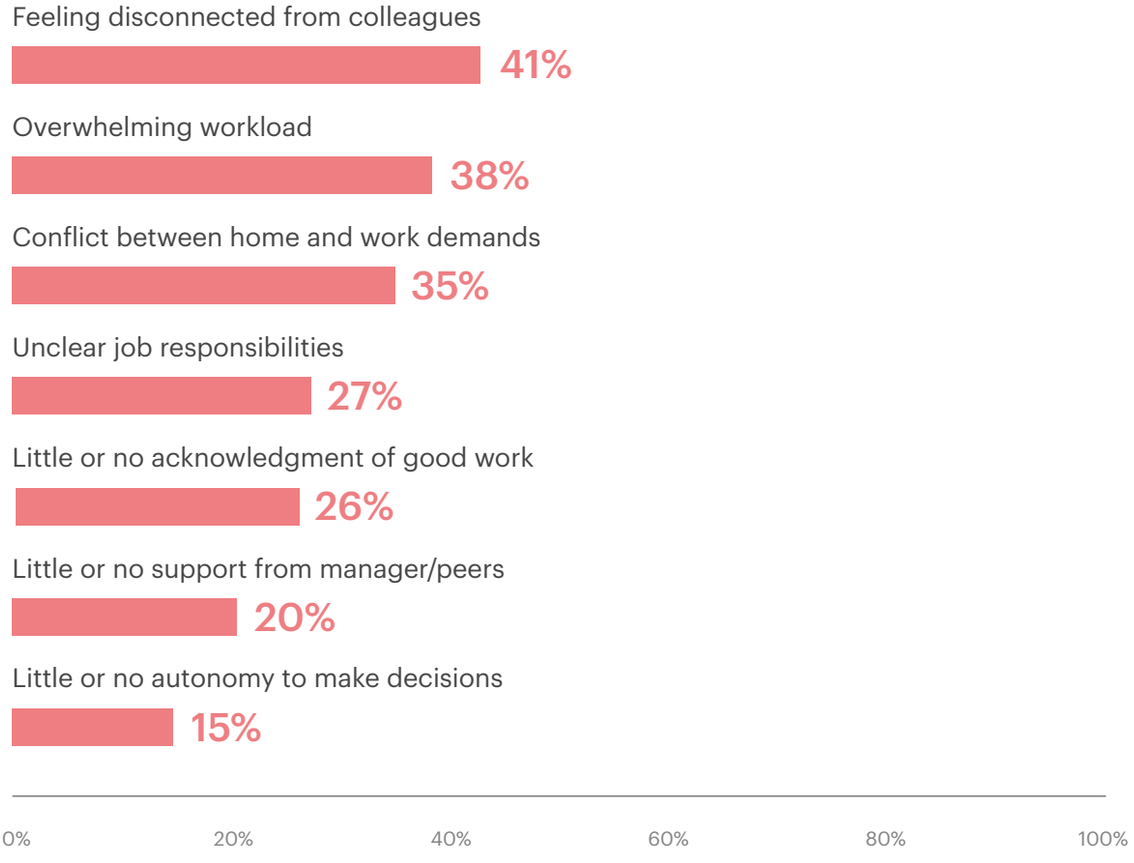
QUARTERLY CHANGE

Between August and December 2020, employee burnout **rose by nearly 4%.** This increase comes after burnout had already hit a two-year high in August 2020, when 5.41% of employee survey comments contained burnout signals.

PRECURSORS TO BURNOUT

Here are the top burnout risk factors that employees have recently experienced.

Employees most frequently cited **feeling disconnected from colleagues** as a burnout precursor.



BURNOUT AND THE GENDER DIVIDE

We looked at how the top burnout risk factors affect women and men differently.

Women feel a heavier burden from their workload than men.

20%

Overall: Women cited experiencing overwhelming workload **20%** more frequently than men.

In smaller organizations (those with up to 1,000 employees): Women cited experiencing overwhelming workload **28%** more frequently than men.

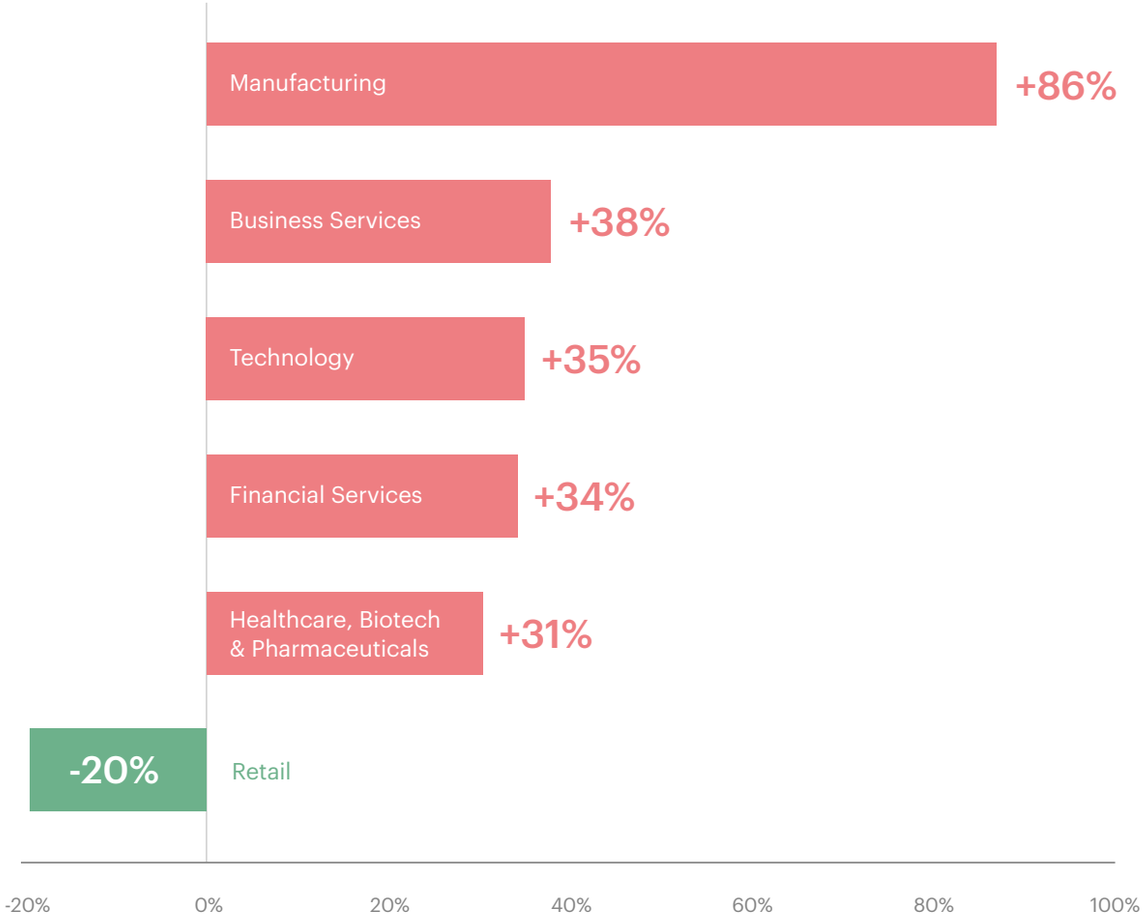
At the leadership levels (manager and higher): Women cited experiencing overwhelming workload **41%** more frequently than men.

BURNOUT ACROSS INDUSTRIES

Mirroring our global burnout metric, burnout levels across all of the industries we track are at unprecedented highs (with the exception of the retail industry).

Manufacturing saw an 86% increase in burnout in 2020. The manufacturing industry's burnout spike is more than twice that of the industry (business services) that saw the second-highest increase in burnout over the same time period.

12-month change, by industry



Top takeaway:

Burnout is *still* rising — but some employees and industries are experiencing a tighter squeeze.

What Glint Head of People Science Strategic Development Amy Lavoie says:

When it comes to the prevailing burnout precursors, it's clear we're all still grappling with the question: How do we create connection for people in a virtual- and hybrid-work world?

We can no longer rely on water-cooler talk, chance run-ins in the hallway, and after-work celebrations to build connections among employees.

Assuming a return to physical offices will re-establish connections among co-workers is not the answer. In this sense, the pandemic has brought lasting change to the working world. We know through our research that employees want flexibility in where they work, and leaders are recognizing that a one-size-fits-all approach is a thing of the past.

Highlighting a shared sense of purpose and culture is also key to connection.

In our experience, organizations that are doing the best job of fostering connection among their employees are thinking differently. First, they are giving employees a voice through frequent feedback pulses. What one group needs for connection or to overcome burnout is likely different from another. For example, a knowledge worker logging countless hours from home may be concerned about prioritization and workload. But an essential worker may be more worried about threats to health and safety. Understanding employees' unique experiences is the best way to build strategies for creating connections and overcoming burnout.

The solution to feelings of overwhelming workload happens at the local level and isn't necessarily guided by an employee's gender.

As for workload, the reality for women can feel disheartening. Managers can create a path forward for all employees—not just women—by candidly talking about well-being, helping prioritize tasks, and clearing barriers.

When leaders get even closer to employee feedback, and ask for it more frequently, they're better positioned to counteract the burnout levels we're seeing—no matter how an employee identifies or what industry they're in.

Organizations best support their employees when they:

1. Ask for frequent feedback.
2. Reinforce shared culture and values.
3. Arm managers with feedback results.
4. Empower managers to have conversations with employees so they can find specific solutions for unique circumstances.

How we measure employee burnout: *Our metric is the average percent of survey comments that express at least one risk factor of burnout, like stress, workload, anxiety, and other related cues.*

Burnout trend and industry insights were derived from a U.S. sample. Burnout precursors insights were derived from a global sample.

The insights in this edition of Glint's Employee Well-Being Report were sourced from a blend of Glint People Success Platform data and Glint-designed surveys of LinkedIn members. Happiness insights spanning 2019 and 2020 came from a sample of more than 9 million Glint survey responses. More than 600,000 survey comments and surveys of 2,000 LinkedIn members were analyzed to produce burnout insights spanning 2019 and 2020.

Visit **glintinc.com/buildthenewworldofwork** for more resources supporting employees' well-being.

Questions? Comments? Feedback? Feel free to reach out to any one of the report's three editors: Catie Farrow, Kris Kitto, and Eric Knudsen.

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